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Date of submission: Tuesday, 19 November 2024

Your submission for this review:

Kiama Municipal Council Submission on Review of Prices for Valuer Generals Services to Councils from 1 July 2025

1. Do you consider the Valuer Generals pricing proposal represents good value? Why/why not? No. According to the proposed prices, the valuation costs for coastal councils, including Kiama Municipal Council, will increase by 38% plus CPI. The paper does not clearly justify why such a significant increase is necessary. It mentions transitioning to in-house valuations rather than contracting out, which should logically result in cost savings, not an increase in overall costs. While some cost-saving measures, such as using a central call centre and AI for valuations, are mentioned, these savings are not quantified.
2. Has there been any material change to the land valuation process that has impacted the cost of undertaking valuations (e.g., contract costs)? The Council is not aware of any such changes.
3. How might the Valuer Generals costs of providing land valuation services change over the next 6 years, considering the impact of digital technology, AI, and innovation? Engaging AI in valuations is a logical step towards cost savings and reducing reliance on contractors. It is expected that overall costs will decrease as a result of using more advanced technology.
4. How should the Valuer Generals costs be allocated between users of valuation services? Our ratepayers are effectively subsidising valuation costs that should be charged to other users of valuations, such as NSW Fire Rescue, NSW Roads and Maritime, NSW Crown Land, etc. Considering that the cost of valuations is increasing exponentially, costs that were previously considered immaterial by the Valuer General could become significant for a small council. We recommend that the Valuer General quantify these estimates and ensure that all costs incurred in relation to state agencies are paid by the NSW Government, not local councils.
5. What is the impact on councils of the Valuer Generals proposed price increases? An increase in valuation costs of 38% is substantial for Kiama Council and needs to be incorporated into rate peg calculations for future years.
6. Should the current four pricing zones be retained, or is there a more appropriate pricing model for land valuation services, such as a single price? Maintaining four pricing zones does not seem logical under the emerging hybrid service delivery approach. To demonstrate that bringing valuations in-house is a cost-efficient approach, we recommend splitting pricing between contracted zones and in-house zones.
7. If a price increase is necessary, should it be implemented in the first year, or gradually over a few years? A gradual increase is the preferred option for Kiama Council.